

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025664
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Ownlife Limited
Registered person address	Triumph House, Station Approach Sanderstead Road South Croydon Surrey CR2 0PL
Responsible individual	David Hastings
Registered manager	Susan Elisabeth Cooke
Date of last inspection	16/01/2014

Inspection date	25/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Effective partnership with the placing authorities, good care planning and highly individualised practice ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. Good safeguarding practice robustly protects children and young people. Children and young people benefit from living in the home with clear rules, consistent boundaries and high staff expectations. They make good progress across different aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. Their educational attainments are particularly strong. Achieving stability of the placements is another positive feature of the service. The home is able to clearly demonstrate the positive difference that the service has made in the lives of children and young people.

Through rigorous monitoring activities, leaders and managers are effective at tackling weaknesses and securing improvement.

The home is run in line with the Children's Homes Regulations. However, some national minimum standards are not consistently met. The weaknesses in the provision relate to the inconsistency in the quality of some records kept by the home. The gaps in recording have not impacted negatively on children and young people.

The inspector recommends that the home improves the record-keeping in respect of: consultation with children and young people, security of the building and staff supervision meetings.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately owned home. The company has one other children's home registered with Ofsted and some other services that focus on promoting young people's independence. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/07/2013	Full	good
08/01/2013	Interim	good progress
20/06/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in aspects of their care. This in particular relates to the frequency of recorded key working sessions and house meetings (NMS 1)
- Risk assessments of the whole children's home environment are carried out, to identify any potential sources of harm to the children, are recorded in writing regularly reviewed. This in particular relates to the security of the building (NMS 10.8)
- A written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date length of each supervision held for each member of staff. (NMS 19.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people have made good progress in developing positive self-views and self-caring skills. They present well in social situations. They communicate well and are able to express their feelings and views in a constructive manner. They have developed good social skills. They are polite and friendly. They are able to develop friendships and relationships and to form attachments. Their increased emotional resilience has enabled them to leave unhealthy relationships behind.

Their physical, psychological and emotional health has improved. They understand the key health risks and the importance of healthy lifestyles. They are more able to take responsibility for their own health and behaviour. They regularly visit health professionals to monitor their health and to receive professional advice. Those young people who came to the home with an established smoking habit, have significantly decreased the number of cigarettes they smoke. Children and young people enjoy active lives and have healthier diets.

They attend regularly their education or training. They have made good progress in their learning. They are motivated to achieve. They have successfully attained good results and completed training leading to professional certificates. This is particularly important, as many of them had a history of significant educational non-engagement.

Some young people have gained valuable work-experience. They are positively involved in the activities in the community. Those young people who came to the home with a history of offending have stopped behaving in ways that are contrary to law and order.

Having gained good life-skills, some young people have successfully moved to semi-independent living.

Quality of care **good**

Proactive relationships with the placing authorities and high quality joint planning ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. Children and young people receive highly individualised care and support that addresses all their needs.

The home's close links with other agencies and professionals, such as those from education, health and children's social care ensure that any barriers to the progress of children and young people are consistently challenged.

The particular strength of this service is that it is effective at promoting continuity of

care and stability of the placements. An example of this is a young person who had over 20 different placements before coming to live in this home. This person is well settled in the home and has made great progress, particularly in education and development of more positive behaviours.

Staff have high aspirations for children and young people. In periods of stagnation and challenge, staff do not give up on children and young people but continue to make effort to engage them in positive ways. Staff maintain clear and consistent boundaries to facilitate the progress of children and young people. Although at times, children and young people test those boundaries, they know that staff are consistently concerned with their welfare and progress. Children and young people respond positively to this approach.

The home operates a key-working system to ensure that children and young people have regular opportunities to speak to staff on an individual basis. Children and young people are also given the opportunities to contribute to the life of the home through the house meetings. However, the records of the individual key-working sessions and of any group discussions are only sporadically recorded. The gaps in records compromise the home's ability to evidence systematically having a consultative approach to care and consistently enabling children and young people to be at the centre of the decision-making process.

The observational logs that are completed on a daily basis for each individual child or young person contain some evidence of how the views and wishes of children and young people influenced their care. The management has also recently carried out a written survey of the satisfaction of children and young people with the quality of care they receive. Their responses were mainly positive. In response to their request for more individual time with their key-workers, the home has introduced a co-key working system. The new system is still to be fully embedded in the provision of care.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children and young people report that they feel safe in the home and outside it. The home's zero tolerance to any form of bullying or intimidation is rigorously reinforced. The home also has a zero-tolerance policy on any form of discriminatory attitudes or behaviour. Staff give clear messages to children and young people about what is right and what is wrong and the importance of valuing people's differences. Staff consistently apply house-rules and positive behaviour management strategies to promote constructive behaviours and ethical attitudes.

Comprehensive care plans and detailed risk assessments are regularly monitored and reviewed. Those documents clearly identify protective strategies that staff robustly apply to promote the safety and welfare of children and young people. Staff's

thorough understanding of safeguarding and proactive behaviour management practice has contributed to the low level of incidents in the home.

Sanctions are used sparingly and with good impact. Children and young people did not repeat any of the behaviours for which they were sanctioned. Staff consistently celebrate and reward the achievements and constructive behaviours of children and young people.

From time to time, older teenagers were absent from the home without authority. However, the incidents when they were missing were rare. On each occasion when this happened, they returned home on their own accord, safe and well. The home works in close partnership with the young people and their social workers to minimise these incidents and agree a right level of reporting to the police that is protective, but not over-reactive.

The safeguarding training that staff recently received covered child protection risks, including child sexual exploitation, forced marriages and female genital mutilation. Last year, all staff received training in behaviour management.

There have been no restraints in the home. There have been no incidents that required child protection referrals. There have been no complaints raised.

The regular health and safety checks ensure the safety of the premises. The recorded risk assessment in respect of the premises is regularly reviewed and updated. However, this document does not include the risk assessment regarding the security of the home. This is despite the recent breach of security, when a young person's friend was in the bedroom, initially without the knowledge of staff on duty. The management has reviewed the security arrangements and consulted with the fire services in respect of window locks and restrictors. The best options to enhance the security arrangements without compromising the home's escape plan in case of an emergency were considered and agreed. This is being taken forward by the home, but the written risk assessment has not been updated. There have been no further incidents of this nature.

Leadership and management

good

in July 2013, an appropriately qualified manager registered with Ofsted to manage this organisation's two small children's homes. In June 2014, the provider voluntarily cancelled the registration of one of these homes. The manager is now more able to focus on developing the service in this home.

Prior to being employed by this company, Susan Cooke was a registered manager for different homes for 12 years. She is a qualified social worker and has created a culture of strong safeguarding in the home. The priority is consistently given to promoting the welfare of children and young people and understanding them in the

context of their life-stories. Staff members have commented very favourably about the quality of the safeguarding training that she has recently delivered, in collaboration with a colleague. They have also commented more generally, about her high professional competence and good leadership skills.

The management has continued to keep up with legislation and with the developments in the social care field. The up-to-date information is shared with staff members on a regular basis to guide the continual improvement of their practice and professional development. Staff receive annual appraisals of their individual performance and comprehensive training on a number of different subjects.

At the regular team meetings, the care practice in the home is reviewed in the light of the individual children and young people. The staff and their managers confirm that they also meet one-to-one on a monthly basis to discuss the staff's individual practice and any personal issues that might impact on their work. However, as the records of the supervision meetings have not been consistently kept, the home is unable to clearly evidence regular supervision of staff.

Ofsted receives regular monthly monitoring reports that have been completed by an independent visitor and also, quarterly reports on the quality of care that have been completed by the registered person. Those documents demonstrate that rigorous monitoring activities take place and involve various stakeholders, including children and young people. The management has a strong commitment to improvement and appropriate actions are taken to address any weakness identified.

At the interim inspection, the management was asked to improve the quality of individual risk assessments. This has been achieved.

Achieving positive outcomes for children and young people and maximising their life-chances remain the main focus for the service and the measure of its effectiveness. The key-workers and the manager review the outcomes for each child or young person on a monthly basis. When it is needed, additional targeted interventions are put in place to ensure good progress across different areas of their development. The social workers and independent reviewing officers comment positively about the monthly progress reports that they receive for each child or young person. The home is able to clearly demonstrate the positive difference that the service has made on the lives of children and young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.